My Father's Luncheonette

by Melanie Hope Greenberg

$12.95

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by Melanie Hope Greenberg

It's twelve hops on the left foot, eight hops on the right foot, and twenty-three skips from the little girl's home to the luncheonette owned by her father. While he flips burgers, fizzes sodas, and scoops ice cream, she plays the jukebox or spins on a counter stool. The hours whirl by, from the lunch crunch to lights out at closing time.

Like a vintage recording, sweet and sure to bring back memories, Melanie Hope Greenberg's book evokes a certain place and time, and the special feelings shared by a young helper and her father.

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by Melanie Hope Greenberg

DUTTON CHILDREN'S BOOKS
NEW YORK

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Dedicated to my parents, Larry and Ruth,
and my sisters, Barbara and Joni.

Special thanks to Jane, Lucia, On the Job, Judy,
Andy, The Promenade Diner, Larry's Luncheonette,
and rock 'n' roll.

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Summary: A young girl enjoys a day of eating a fat, juicy burger, dancing to the music of the jukebox, and mopping the floor at her father's luncheonette.
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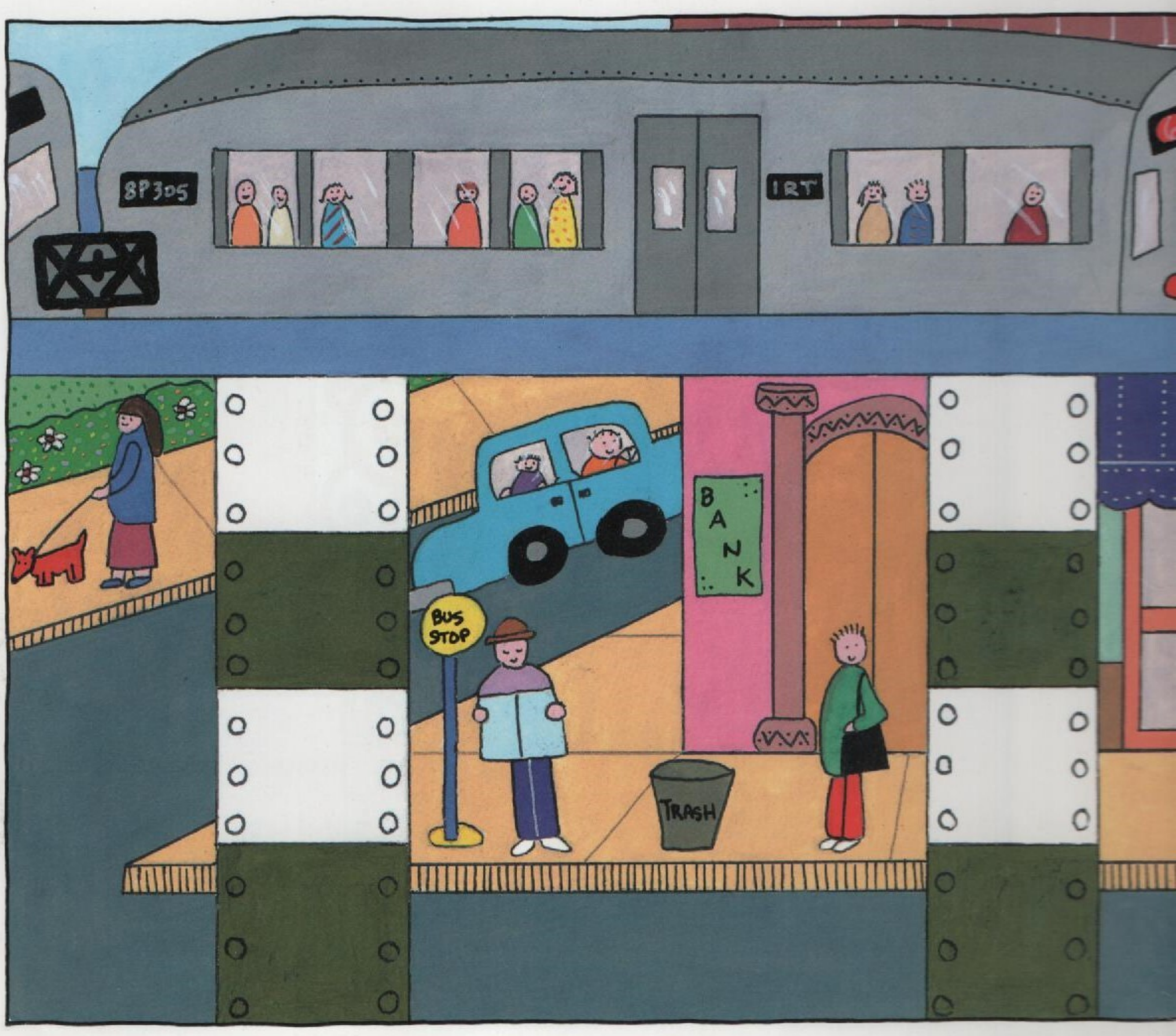
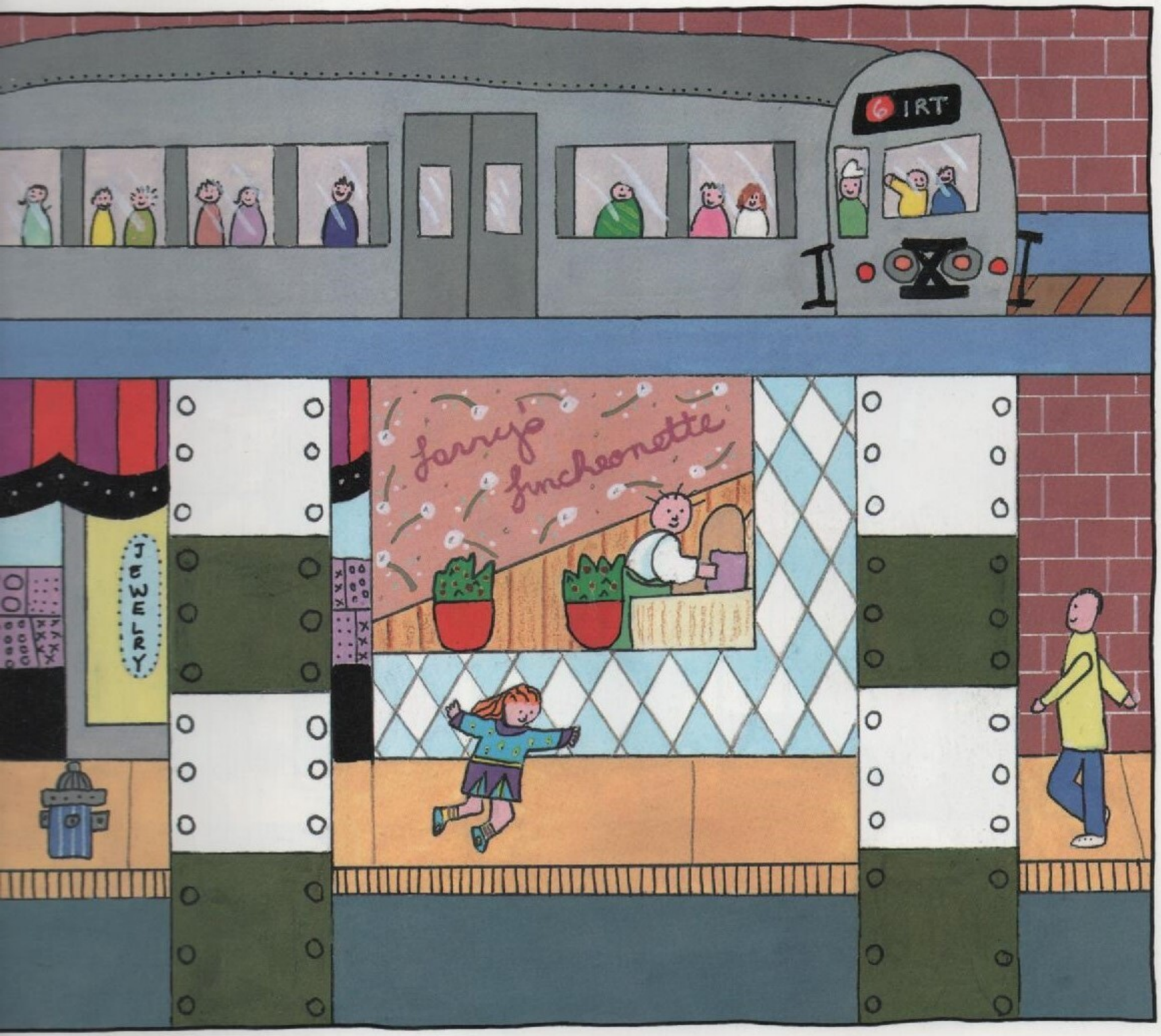
First Edition 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

My father's luncheonette is
twelve hops on my left foot,
eight hops on my right foot,
twenty-three skips,
and around the corner from where I live.

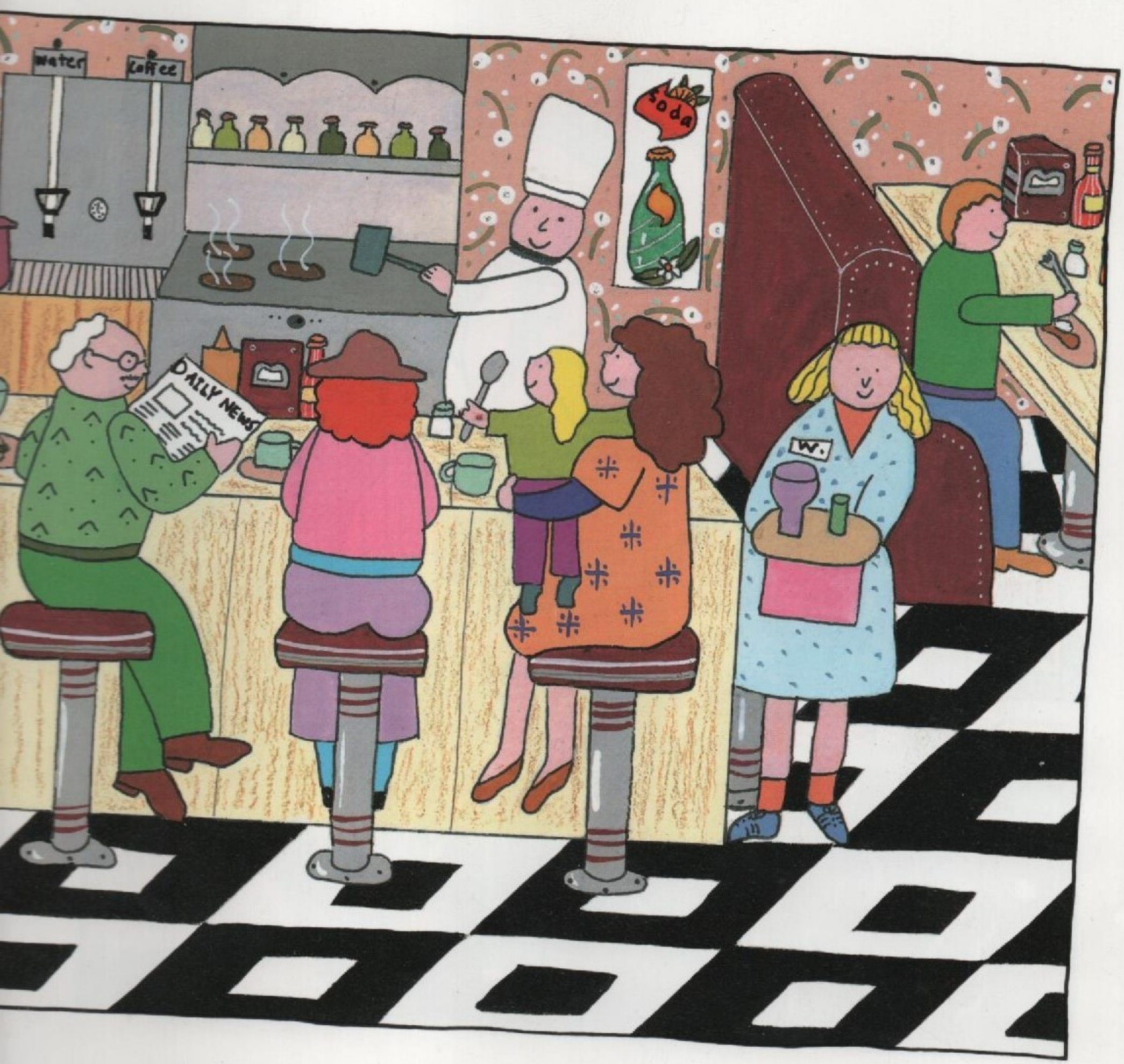


The noisy Number 6 train
rattles overhead as I race
past the South Bronx Savings Bank,



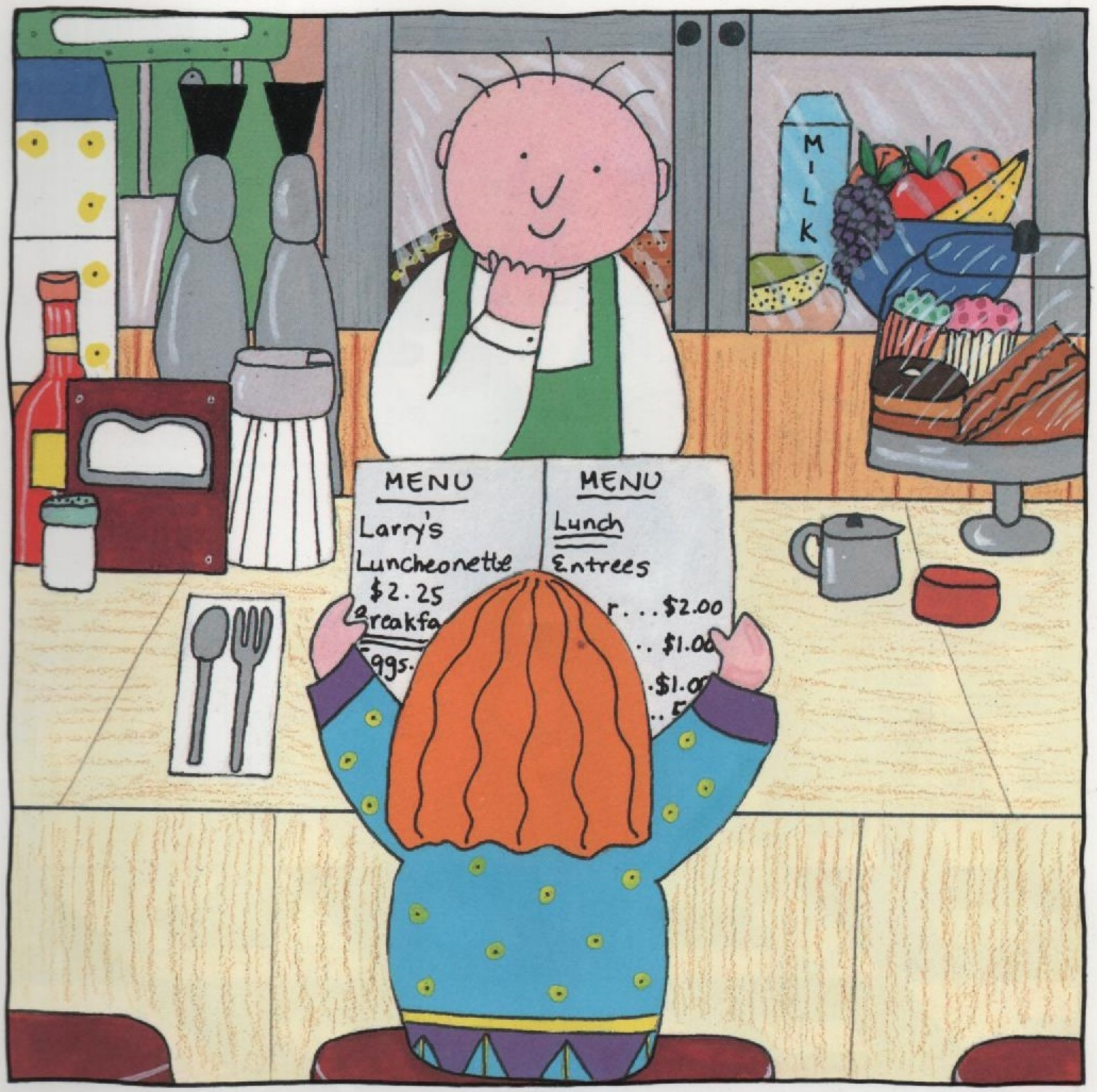
Abie's Hardware Store,
and Sandbanks Jewelry Shop.
Then I'm there.

People come to my father's luncheonette



for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

When it is time for the lunch crunch,
my father flips a zillion burgers,
cooks up a million grilled-cheese sandwiches,
and fizzes up a thousand sodas.



But I am his best customer.
I love to order from the menu.
"I'll have a fat, juicy burger,
a bubbly egg cream, and your
very special squiggly French fries, please."

I twirl around on the tall stool like a ballerina
while I wait for my dessert—
vanilla ice cream with chocolate sprinkles. Yum!

My best friend, Ronnie, loves to meet me at the luncheonette. Today she can order anything she wants. My treat!

We sit in the booth at the back.
Ronnie orders a Best Friend Special—
a square-scooped strawberry ice-cream soda
with rainbow sprinkles. My father makes it
just for her.

Then we dance to the jukebox—
Shing-a-Ling, Boog-a-Loo,
Mashed Potatoes, and the Twist.
My father always has dimes and
quarters to play the latest hits.

After Ronnie goes home, I clip
the Dinner Special signs to the menus.
Tonight's special is pot roast.

MENU
Larry's
Luncheonette
$2.25
Breakfast
Eggs...
Cereal...
Oatmeal...
Bacon...
Tea...
Toast...
MENU
Lunch
Entrees
Burger $2.00
Tuna..$1.00
Fries..$1.00
Soda... 50¢
Soup..$1.00
Salad..$1.00
Coffee..50¢
MENU
Lunch
Entrees
Burger $2.00
Tuna..$1.00
Fries..$1.00
Soda...50¢
Soup..
Salad..
Coffee..
MENU
DINNER SPECIAL
POT ROAST
with soup
salad
MENU
Cereal.
Oatmeal
Bacon...
Tea...
Toast...

When Wanda the waitress takes her break,
I get to be the waitress. I bring
Wanda a glass of water and take her order.
I hope she orders toast.
It's the only thing I know how to make—

except my Super Special Playtime Potion.
I mix ketchup, sugar, raspberry syrup, mustard,
and ten spoonfuls of dishwater in a glass.
"A budding chef," my father says proudly.
He doesn't mind the mess.

After the last customer leaves,
we get ready to close my father's luncheonette.
It's mop-up time!
Steamy hot bubbles slush over black-and-white tiles.

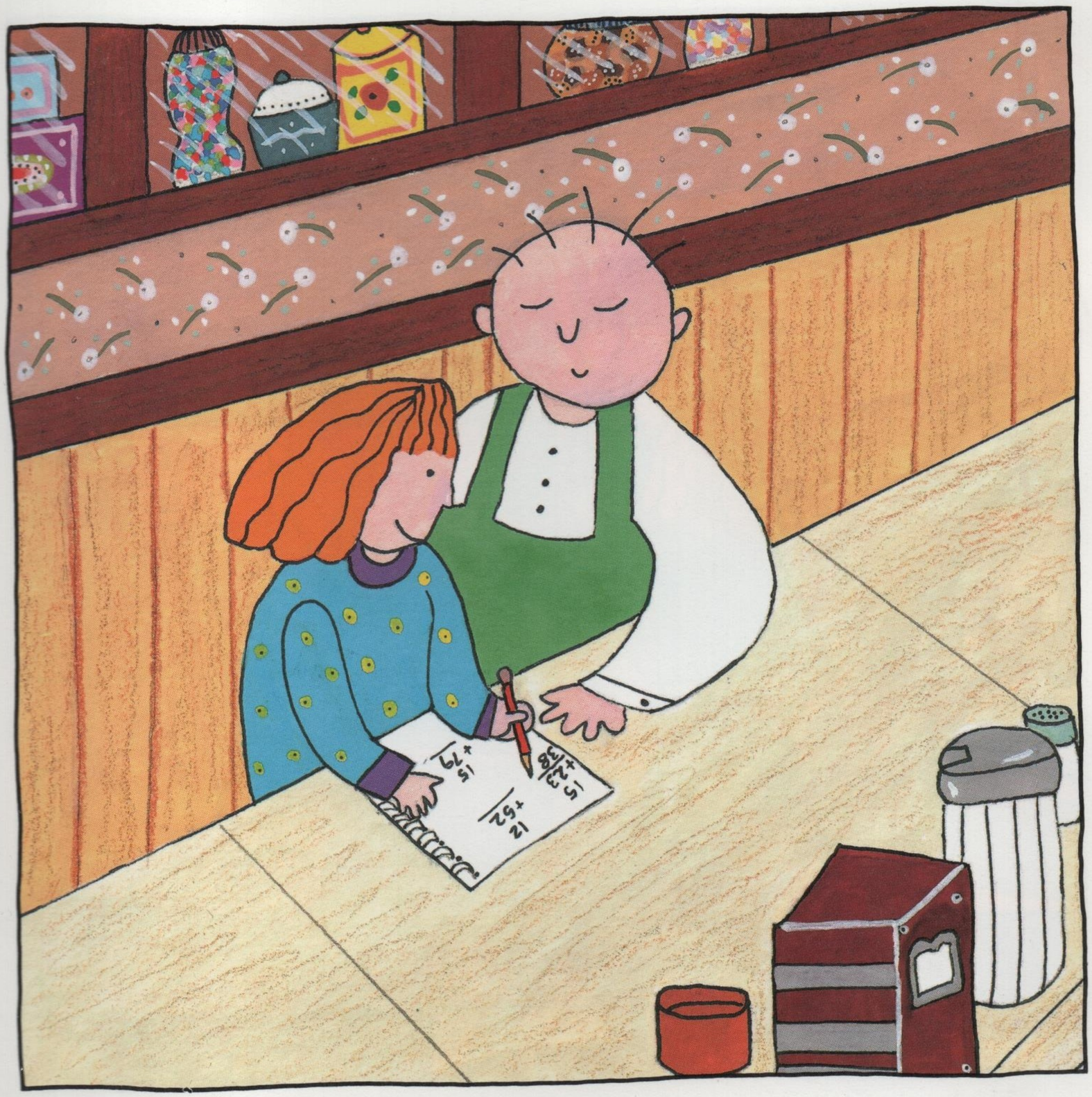
When they are dry,
I hop, hop, hop on one foot
and never land on a white tile.

My father can finally sit down and relax.

I ask him,

"Can you help me with my homework now?"

And he always does.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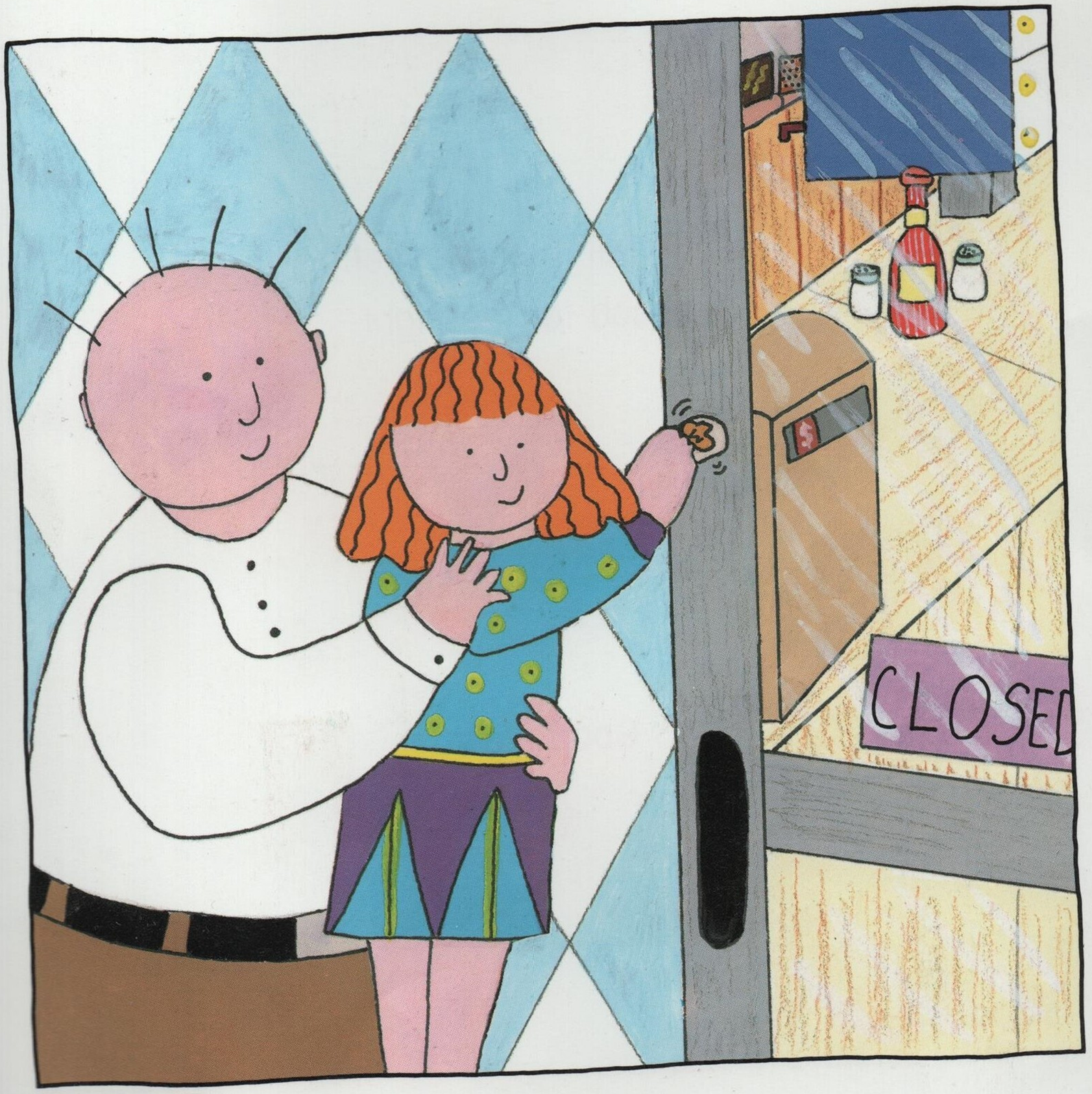
On tiptoe, I can reach the switch
to turn off the neon light in the window.



Together we pull the door tight.
Then I twirl the key in the lock.

My father's luncheonette
is closed for the night.

Good night.

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J E
Greenberg

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My father's luncheonette

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The real Larry's Luncheonette was in the Bronx, New York. Melanie Greenberg spent her days there as a child.

Now, she writes and illustrates from her home in Brooklyn, New York. She also designs her own greeting cards, wrapping paper, mugs, and other novelty items.

Ms. Greenberg is the author and illustrator of one other book, *At the Beach.*

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NEW YORK

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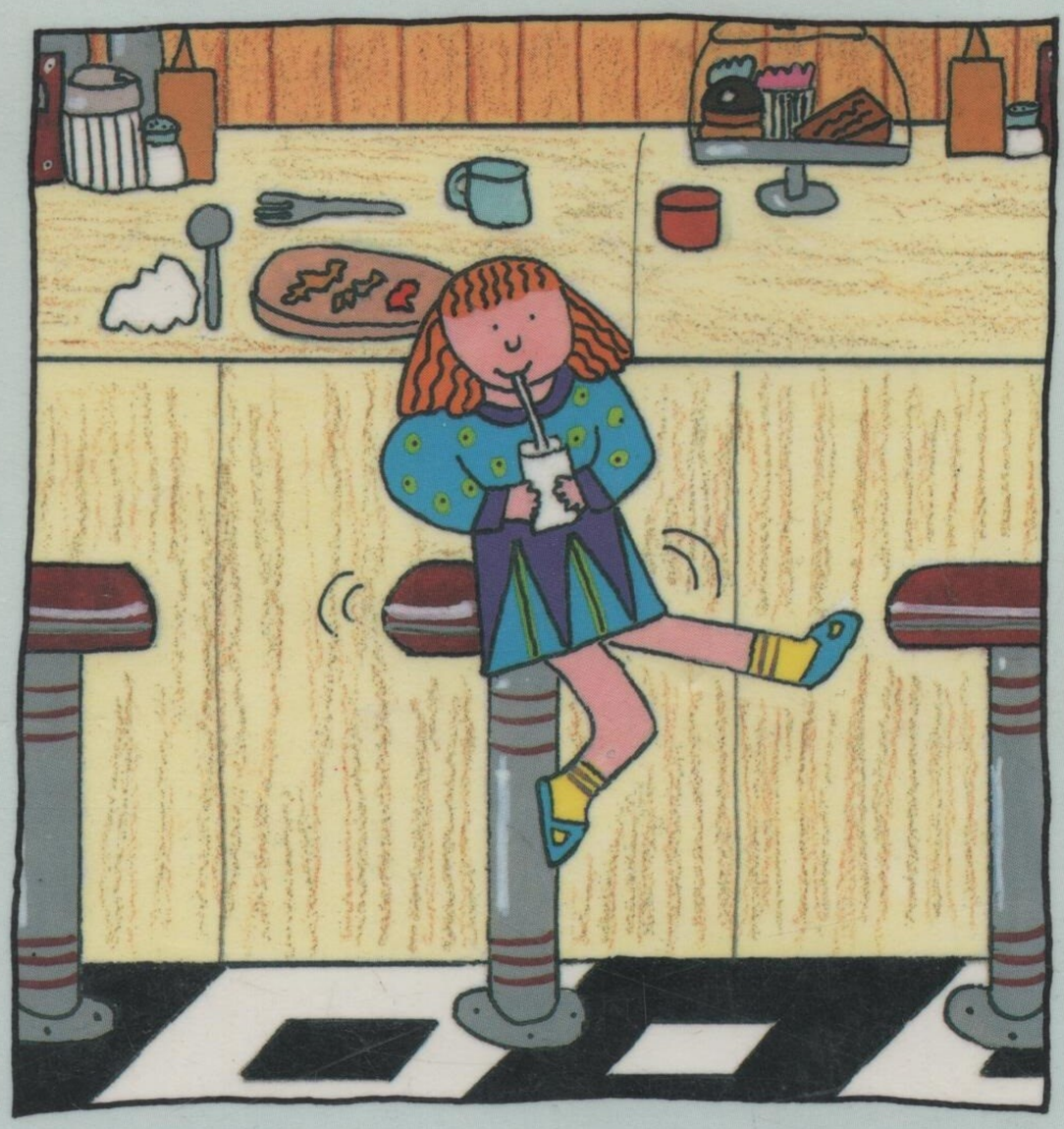

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